Upper Path Valley Presbyterian Church

*He Was in the Beginning, Part 4*

*The Door to Safety*

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This morning, I am humbled to bring you this morning’s message as we continue in the book of Genesis series. Have you ever thought about your ancestry? You know, the links of past generations in your family tree. Can you point to someone in the history of your family that you thought walked with God? When I think about my family tree and walking with God, I always think about my grandmothers. One would embarrass me in church with her booming singing voice, harmonically beautiful. The other one had such grace about her, quiet, kind, and faithful. Each faithful and obedient, but realizing they were not without sin. What I learned from them is that they loved to tell the story, knowing about the grace of God because they believed and lived their lives accordingly in their walk with God. I found out recently my grandmother Claire played the organ for the wedding of Meagan’s parents. And as I reflect on my heritage and what my grandmothers passed on to me, think about how vital it is that you give your children a godly heritage because we are forging the next generation. On the other hand, reflecting on my grandfathers, well, I understand from some of the stories I’ve heard, I know where some of my youthful tendencies came from before I came to realize it was time to walk closer with God.

Families are falling apart, and we should think about the coming time of the Lord because the moral decline of human behavior is rotting away beyond recovery awaiting God’s final judgment. Since the beginning; the Bible is clear that God has been reaching out to form a relationship with men and women to make himself visible. There is this inaudible sense inside of us reaching out to have the last word, but our separate thoughts and feelings battle with the freedom of obeying God’s instructions. This morning, we will learn that Noah questioned his ability to hear God clearly, and mournful of his fears and past failures that would make him look like a fool. Sadly, all of humanity gravitates toward the knowledge of evil, and that knowledge is called sin, and it’s been with us ever since and crouching at the door ready to attack both you and me. Here humanity wants to do what is right, but the experience of sin is always at hand. Created in His image, but ruined by The Fall, there is still hope promised through a deliverer born of a woman who will engage evil and triumph over all hostility. Brothers and sisters, that deliverer is Jesus Christ, and we will learn how the ark of Noah and Christ commonly fit into the bigger picture.

As a firm believer in a young earth, the Genesis story happened at least 6000 years ago, but the days of Noah is not unlike the current times that are on the brink of God’s judgment. People live different lifestyles, and sadly, there is a worldview that society finds itself moving in a different direction from believing that the punishment from God is outdated and where the selfishness of humankind places themselves at the center of their worship. This worldview strays from worshipping God with no hand on the wheel heading for the rocks of destruction. But there is a worldview where God is at the center and a belief that God is the creator worthy of allowing His hand to guide the direction of the ship. One ship is heading toward a God-centered life, and the other toward the rocks.

In a quick review of the earlier chapters of Genesis, we see the ships going in two different directions. Adam and Eve have two children, Cain and Abel. Here we see that sin was more complicated than anticipated. Cain kills his brother Abel, and then later Eve gives birth to another son, Seth, whose name means “to substitute,” and here we begin to see two lines of descendants. Cain goes off to build an isolated people from God, wanting a relationship with God on his terms, rather than on the words of God, and subsequently, so do his descendants. But in chapter 4 verse 26, we read that Seth turns towards God and men began to call on the name of the Lord.

Starting in Chapter five begins this long list of names in the generations of Adam that no one wants to read or pronounce, but it is essential to know this because it is the line of faith of those who have set their wheel to seek the direction of God. It is through the family of Seth that Noah becomes the last family member acknowledged as the hope of humanity and the recipient of God’s grace and where all the living become destroyed. For us to understand the Scriptures, it is critical to see that from this point forward that the breath of God’s Spirit is still with us, but also that man is mortal flesh. Humankind has two seeds. One with God’s seed in His likeness and one produced by Adam in his image. One with the power of a divine blessing and one with the power of an evil heart cursed beyond recovery.

So let’s move into Chapter 6 and unpack three things; that God **saves by grace, through faith, and God saves in Christ.** The story of Noah and Flood is a remarkable story that almost everyone has heard since childhood. We have all seen pictures of the Ark, and the animals it carried. What we should learn from this story is that it was not this little cute sanitized story, but a template to preserve the human family as a successor to Adam. So how are we to be protected the next time? Let’s take a look at God’s word together, picking up in Genesis 6:5.

 **“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.** [**6**](http://biblehub.com/genesis/6-6.htm)**The LORD was sorry that He had made the man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.** [**7**](http://biblehub.com/genesis/6-7.htm)**The LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.”** [**8**](http://biblehub.com/genesis/6-8.htm) **But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.” 9This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. 10Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. 12God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 13So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. 14So make yourself an ark of cypress[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6%3A9-22&version=NIV#fen-NIV-152a)**] wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. 15This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high.[**[**b**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6%3A9-22&version=NIV#fen-NIV-153b)**] 16Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit[**[**c**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6%3A9-22&version=NIV#fen-NIV-154c)**] high all around.[**[**d**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+6%3A9-22&version=NIV#fen-NIV-154d)**] Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. 17I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. 18But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you. 19You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. 20Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. 21You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.” 22Noah did everything just as God commanded him.”**

First, God saves his people by grace. Take notice to **verse 8** “Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.” Now, this is the first time the Bible refers to the word “favor,” and according to the biblical study of the word means gaining special benefits or blessings and further translated as “grace.” Grace, the goodness of God extended to human beings in response to prayer or righteous living. For Noah, it meant that God looked upon him with love, kindness, mercy, and compassion. And here the theme of judgment and salvation enters as God finds favor on the few in Noah and his family.

God’s heart is not without emotion; filled with pain and anger over the consequences of man’s moral failures, the very thing He created. But what we should think about is that the making of man was no error, but it is what “man” made of himself. Unlike humanity, God is under no obligation to change his heart or his nature. God never changes. However, back in verse 6, God is sorry and grieving in his heart regarding Noah’s generation and decides to change course. So in God’s divine nature, He plans to judge Noah’s generation and destroy life and start again. Despite Noah’s flaw of human impulse, Noah is the best candidate to receive God’s bestowal of a gracious favor as the recipient of God’s promise to humanity to renew the human race. Why? **Because Noah was a believer and was willing to change his heart.** One thing we should remember is that God is under no obligation to bestow his favor upon anyone for as the apostle Paul realized is that “favor” is understood by faith, a gift of grace that results in righteousness. We must be willing to accept this gift.

Beginning in verse 13, God reaches out to Noah and says to him that there is a judgment of destruction coming, and being that Noah comes from the line of Seth, God revealed himself to Noah in some fashion because he walked with God. To me, it is evident that Noah wanted to hear what God had to say, and that should be of some comfort to us that if we truly desire God to reveal himself to us, we must seek ways to open the door and safely enter into the ark of safety to hear Him. Meagan said it so graciously in an earlier sermon that it’s not God’s fault if we do not hear His voice. It is up to us, and somehow Noah sensed the call that led him to the door of safety. “Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him.”

Now Noah was no ordinary man for the NT tells us in 2 Peter 2:5, that Noah was a preacher, a preacher of truth and righteousness. The Bible does not tell us when he began preaching, but only that he was a preacher who urged repentance and called by his hearers a man gone mad. It is safe to assume that during the time while Noah was building the ark, he was speaking to his disobedient generation living around him about the coming judgment of God and that God would not spare the ungodly.

Those at the Ark Encounter in Williamstown KY think it was possible to build the ark in fewer than 70 years. Nonetheless, not only did Noah hear God, but now all of those listening to Noah for at least 70 years was also hearing the truth of God’s warning, and that judgment upon the world and its sin were coming. And so it is God’s grace to everyone who hears Noah speak of Gods warning and how they too can be saved.

Look at Verse 14 and 16. God tells Noah to make an ark out of cypress wood and put a door in the side of the ark. God shows Noah how to enter into the place of safety; through the door. Remember the door. **Here we see** **the saving grace of God that comes through a heads up, a warning to what lies ahead.**

Secondly, God saves people through faith. It wasn’t Noah’s preaching but his faith by which he “condemned the world.” Hebrews 11:7 it says this; “By faith Noah, when warned about things not seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith, he condemned the world and became the heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.” In Genesis 6:9, we are told that Noah was a righteous man. Was Noah a perfect man? No, not at all, but Noah found -- favor with God. It was God’s grace that came first. Noah believed the word of God then obeyed his instructions by acting upon it, and this is where Noah became an heir of the righteousness that is by faith. Now, it couldn’t have been easy for Noah to believe God in his day, to prepare for something that had never happened before. But you know what, God warns us to prepare too for something that has never happened before. Just as the mocking of Noah for his warning of the coming judgment by God, we too are laughed at by our faith.

2 Peter 3:7 says, “the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.” The evidence of biblical faith is right in front of us in that Noah went and built the ark because he believed. Noah did what God told him as he allowed him to put his hand on the wheel and guide his life knowing that the judgment of God was coming. We must believe what God has said and do what he has commanded. The fruit of obedience. So Noah gets in the ark, and the rain comes to carry Noah and his family into a new world.

Lastly, in Christ, we are saved. The ark of Noah is a beautiful illustration of what Christ does for us and not just a sanitized cartoon picture. Just as God provides the ark for Noah, God provides in the Lord Jesus Christ for us, the door to safety from the coming judgment of God upon the earth that is yet to come. Jesus said in Matthew 24:37, “As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be at the coming of the Son of Man.” Just as those who are inside the ark are safe, and those outside the ark will perish, so all who are in Christ will be safe, and all those who are outside of Christ will likewise perish. And just as God spoke to his people through Noah, God speaks to you today.

Think of Jesus Christ as the ark. If you are in Christ by faith in Him, you will be led safely through the door of life. “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ, all will be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22). Jesus said, “I am the door; whoever enters through me will be saved” (John 10:9). Judgment begins when God shuts the door. So, are you walking toward the door? The door is open, not forever, but open today. The saving grace of Jesus Christ invites both you and your family to come on in through the door and out of the rain.

